State	No. of gardens which remain closed at present
West Bengal	10
Assam	4
Tripura	1
Kerala	19
TOTAL :	34

(b) Appropriate action as provided in the relevant Acts is taken against defaulters for recovery of the outstanding dues of Provident Fund.

(c) There are different views with regard to fixing the percentage of tea to be sold compulsorily through public tea auctions and no final decision has been taken in this regard.

Development of tea industry

1780. SHRI CHITTABRATA MAJUMDAR:
SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether tea is being declared a national drink of the country and if not, the reasons therefor;

(b) whether any incentive for production of orthodox tea is being announced;

(c) whether any modality has been worked out by Government for formulation of a special purpose fund for a replantation/rejuvenation of tea gardens and if so, the details thereof; and

(d) whether a Small Grower Development Agency is being set up under the aegis of Tea Board for the small growers in tea sector and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) Declaration of tea as a national drink of the country is one of the recommendations that emerged during the stakeholders' conference on challenges before Indian tea industry held on 16th and 17th September, 2004.

(b) The proposal to provide incentives for production of orthodox tea from out of the special fund created with collections of additional excise duty on tea is under consideration of the Government.

(c) No modality has been worked out yet for formulation of a special purpose fund for replantation/rejuvenation of tea gardens.

(d) The stakeholders' conference on tea has also recommended that in order to provide regular extension and marketing support to small growers and manufacturers, a special programme may be put in place under the aegis of the Tea Board to take care of their special needs. In pursuance of this, Tea Board has proposed setting up of a Small Growers Development Directorate under the aegis of the Tea Board.

Indo-EU Trade

1781. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose any steps to remove hurdles for further enhancement of trade between E.U. countries and India; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) and (b) The steps taken by the Government to remove the hurdles and further enhance trade between India and EU countries, *inter alia* include interaction at Government level, facilitating direct contact between businessmen, participation in trade promotion events, exchange of delegations, etc.

Export of steel

1782. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether export of steel has increased after imposition of restrictive measures by the US;

(b) whether Government have planned to improve export of steel; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the steps being taken by Government?